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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 /111 W
----------094633 242240Z /73
R 241000Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6534
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T RABAT 5170

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MOPS CG FR BE MO
SUBJECT: US SUPPORT FOR MOROCCAN ZAIRE EFFORT

REF A. STATE 203772, B. STATE 211443

1. FOLLOWING IS OUR ASSESSMENT OF GOM VIEWS ON SHABA AFRICAN FORCE AND RESUPPLY QUESTIONS.

2. BACKGROUND. MOROCCAN PARTICIPATION IN THE SHABA PEACEKEEPING EFFORT, WHILE NOT YET THE SOURCE OF MAJOR DOMESTIC DISSATISFACTION, FALLS FAR SHORT OF ENJOYING BROAD SUPPORT HERE. NEVERTHELESS, THE KING VIEWS THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE AS SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT TO ACCEPT SOME GRUMBLING. HASSAN IS CONVINCED THAT THE WEST, OF WHICH HE CONSIDERS MOROCCO A PART IN THIS CASE, MUST BE PREPARED TO TAKE CONCRETE ACTION TO COUNTER ADVENTURISM IN AFRICA BY THE SOVIETS,
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CUBANS AND THEIR ALLIES. THUS, HE HAS BEEN IN THE PAST PRIVATELY CRITICAL OF PERCEIVED US UNREADINESS TO ACT AND, CONVERSELY, QUALIFIEDLY GRATIFIED WITH OUR SUPPORT ROLE IN SHABA II. AT OUR PROMPTING, MOROCCO FORMALLY REQUESTED AND WAS GIVEN OUR PERMISSION TO SEND US-SOURCED ARMS WITH ITS FORCES. MOROCCO HAS FROM THE BEGINNING BEEN CLEARLY IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE AFRICAN FORCE IN SHABA-- ACTIVE IN BEHIND THE SCENES ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHER AFRICAN STATES AND NOW

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PROVIDING THE MAJOR PEACEKEEPING FORCE ON THE GROUND. PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, MOROCCO IS THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRY WHICH HAS MOST CLEARLY ENGAGED ITS PRESTIGE IN SHABA -- AND HAS AS A RESULT BEEN SUBJECT TO CRITICISM AT RANDOM AND AT THE NAM CONFERENCE IN BELGRADE.

3. THE SHABA AFRICAN FORCE. THE GOM COMMITMENT TO SHABA IS ESSENTIALLY OPEN-ENDED. THERE ARE NO SIGNS YET THAT THE GOM IS ACTIVELY CONSIDERING WITHDRAWAL. TO THE CONTRARY, MOROCCO HAS MADE AT LEAST A TENTATIVE DECISION TO SEND AN ADDITIONAL 250-300 TROOPS TO ZAIRE, PRINCIPALLY THE LAKE TANGANYIKA AREA WHERE THERE ARE NOW NONE. TO REVIEW THE BIDDING ON THIS QUESTION (1) FOLLOWING THE KING'S HAVING MENTIONED TO ASST. SECY. SAUNDERS ON JULY 21 HIS INTENTION TO SEND 500 ADDITIONAL TROOPS, FONMIN BOUCETTA ON AUGUST 11 MADE A REQUEST TO THE AMBASSADOR FOR AMERICAN HELP IN TRANSPORTING APPROX. 300 TROOPS TO ZAIRE. HE STATED THAT INSTRUCTIONS HAD BEEN SENT TO AMB. BENJELLOUN IN WASHINGTON TO MAKE A SIMILAR APPROACH; (2) AS OF THIS WRITING, WE UNDERSTAND BENJELLOUN HAD MADE NO SUCH PARALLEL DEMARCHE; (3) RECENT INFO (STATE 212565) INDICATES THAT MOROCCANS MAY BE CONSIDERING TRANSPORTING THIS CONTINGENT THEMSELVES. IN THE MEANTIME, THE MOROCCAN REQUEST FROM BOUCETTA STANDS-- EVEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE SUPPORTING DEMARCHE FROM BENJELLOUN. UNLESS THIS REQUEST IS WITHDRAWN, WE WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE TO RESPOND. STATE 210350 (NOTAL) PROVIDES US WITH PROVISIONAL, IF-ASKED GUIDANCE.

4. THE MOROCCANS WERE NOT WILLING TO GO TO SHABA ALONE AND ARE COMFORTABLE WITH THE IMAGE OF AFRICAN COOPERATION IN THE PEACEKEEPING
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EFFORT. THEY HAVE ENCOURAGED INTER-AFRICAN COORDINATION ON THE GROUND AND THE MOROCCAN COMMANDER HAS INTEGRATED AND SHARED COMMAND RESPONSIBILITY WHERE POSSIBLE THUS, ALTHOUGH THE MOROCCANS HAVE NO PRESENT PLANS FOR LEAVING ZAIRE, THEY WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT REMAIN IN SHABA WITHOUT OTHER AFRICAN TROOPS.

5. MOROCCAN ATTITUDE TOWARD A MEETING ON ZAIRE WOULD DEPEND ON THE FORMAT. OUR SUPPOSITION IS THAT THE GOM WOULD NOT BE ADVERSE TO MEETING ON ZAIRE IF A CLEAR DISTINCTION IS MAINTAINED BETWEEN WHAT AFRICANS ARE DOING IN ZAIRE AND WHAT EUROPEANS ARE DOING. ANY FORMAT LENDING ITSELF TO A CONSTRUCTION OF AFRICAN STOOGISM OR EUROPEAN PATRONIZING WOULD INCUR STRONG RESISTANCE. WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ENVISAGE A COMBINED EUROPEAN-AFRICAN MEETING IN EUROPE ABOUT WHICH THE MOROCCANS WOULD BE ENTHUSIASTIC. ON THE OTHER HAND, A TWO-TIERED MEETING AS SUGGESTED BY ABIDJAN (ABIDJAN 7788) MIGHT INCREASE THE ATTRACTIVENESS TO THE GOM. MOROCCO WILL COME TO ANY MEETING WITH THE PRECONCEPTION THAT INTERESTED INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES SHOULD DO MORE, NOT LESS, SO LONG AS A THREAT TO THE STABILITY AND ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY OF SHABA REMAINS. THE ATTITUDE OF THE GOM WILL ALSO BE AFFECTED BY THE FACT THAT IT HAS NOT SHARED IN THE FUNDS THE SAUDIS GAVE THE FRENCH FOR SHABA II.

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6. RESUPPLY. GOM MADE SOUNDINGS IN JUNE (RABAT 4371 NOTAL) WHICH INDICATED IT WISHED TO REQUEST FORMALLY RE-ARMING OF UNITS REMAINING IN MOROCCO WHICH THE MOROCCANS SAY WERE STRIPPED OF EQUIPMENT BY THE SHABA EXERCISE. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SHABA MISSION AND RETURN OF MOROCCAN TROOPS, DISPOSITION OF DUPLICATE EQUIPMENT WOULD REST WITH THE USG. THE GOM ALSO RAISED THE QUESTION OF SUPPORT IN MONEY OR KIND FOR AT LEAST SOME OF THE FOOD, MUNITIONS AND POL WHICH THE EXERCISE HAS REQUIRED. IN HIS JULY 21 MEETING WITH THE KING, WHO FORMALIZED THE REQUEST ALBEIT WITHOUT DETAILS, ASST SECY SAUNDERS SAID THAT THE US HAD THIS MATTER UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION (RABAT 4441 NOTAL). THIS MOROCCAN REQUEST FOR RESUPPLY, WHILE IMPRECISE, STILL STANDS.

7. COMMENT: OUR APPROACH TOWARD THE PAN AFRICAN FORCE AND ANY
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DECISIONS ON THE DEGREE OF OUR SUPPORT WILL CLEARLY TRANSCEND CONSIDERATIONS OF MOROCCAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS. HOWEVER, WE DO WISH TO ENSURE THAT WE FACTOR INTO THE EQUATION THE CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON MOROCCAN-US BILATERAL RELATIONS--AND THE BROADER QUESTIONS WHICH THESE AFFECT--OF WHAT WE DO OR DON'T DO. INDEED NOT ONLY WHAT BUT HOW. THE RECENT VISIT OF ASST SECY MOOSE WAS PARTICULARLY USEFUL IN ALERTING THE MOROCCANS TO OUR SOMETIMES DIFFERING OPTIC ON SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. AT THE SAME TIME, THE DIFFERENT CONTEXTS IN WHICH MOROCCO IS IMPORTANT TO US, E.G. MID-EAST AND NORTH AFRICAN EQUATION, ARGUES FOR FULL WASHINGTON ATTENTION TO THE IMPLICATIONS IN THAT CONTEXT OF POLICIES IN THE SUB-SAHARAN ARENA.
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